

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 DHA-02 ORM-01 OMB-01 /095 W

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R 280415Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1774

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARAHCI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ISLAMABAD 7928

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, BD

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 7655; B. ISLAMABAD 7849

SUMMARY: DESPITE ITS DISAPPOINTMENT AND CHAGRIN THAT
THE NEW BDG HAS NOT ADOPTED AN ISLAMIC DESIGNATION,
THE GOP CONTINUES TO REGARD THE AUGUST 15 COUP AS AN
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IMPORTANT WATERSHED AND, TENTATIVELY, AS A POSITIVE

STEP IN PAK-BD RELATIONS. THE PAKS CONSIDERED THE BD UNDER MUJIB ESSENTIALLY AN INDIAN CLIENT AND IN FACE OF WHAT IT REGARDED AS MUJIB'S INTRANSIGENCE WAS BECOMING PROGRESSIVELY LESS INTERESTED IN SEEKING TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH IT. IN THE WAKE OF THE COUP THE GOP NOW SEES BOTH THE POSSIBILITY OF FORWARD MOVEMENT TOWARD IMPROVED PAK-BD RELATIONS AND, MORE IMPORTANT, SEES REAL POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL GAINS IN SUCH TIES. IT CONSIDERS AN IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH BD IMPORTANT AND ATTRACTIVE FOR ITS OWN SAKE, A VIEW WIDELY SHARED BY THE PAK PUBLIC WHICH HAS BEEN IMMENSELY BUOYED BY THE "VINDICATION" OF PAKISTAN IT BELIEVES THE OVERTHROW OF MUJIB HAS SIGNIFIED AND IS ANXIOUS TO HAVE THE GOP ESTABLISH "FRATERNAL" TIES WITH BD.

THE GOP APPEARS TO BE TAKING A REALISTIC APPROACH IN ASSESSING ITS NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN BD, RECOGNIZING THE CONTINUED IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIAN ROLE THERE AND THE LIMITATIONS TO ITS OWN. IT WISHES TO PARTICIPATE WITH OTHERS FRIENDLY TO PAKISTAN IN BRINGING ABOUT A REORIENTATION OF BDG POLICY WHICH WILL HAVE AS ITS RESULT A LESSENING OF INDIAN AND SOVIET INFLUENCE IN DACCA AND, IN CONSEQUENCE, A LIMITED CHANGE IN ITS OWN FAVOR IN THE POWER BALANCE IN THE SUBCONTINENT. ADDITIONALLY, THE GOP UNDOUBTEDLY SEES ADVANTAGES IN THE INTRODUCTION OF A MEASURE OF UNCERTAINTY ON INDIA'S EASTERN FLANK WITH THE INSTALLATION OF A LESS INDIA-ORIENTED REGIME IN BD.

THE PAK OBSERVER AT LIXN PL TO MEET WITH BD REPS: THERE AND IN OTHER CONTACTS WITH THE BENGALIS THE PAKS ARE LIKELY TO BE RECEPTIVE TO ANY BD INITIATIVES LOOKING TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. PLEASED WITH MUSHTAQUE AHMED'S REPLY TO BHUTTO'S MESSAGE OF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT, THEY ARE HOPEFUL THAT SUCH INITIATIVES WILL BE FORTHCOMING AND WOULD CERTAINLY AGREE TO EXCHANGE AMBASSADORS WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS. THE GOP HOPES THAT IMPROVED PAK-BD RELATIONS WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE SIMLA PROCESS, TO

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WHICH IT REMAINS COMMITTED. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO JUDGE WHETHER SUCH AN IMPROVEMENT WILL IN TIME HAVE A FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE OVERALL IMPACT ON INDO-PAK ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH THE GRADUAL FADING OF THE EXCITEMENT AND EXHILARATION TRIGGERED IN PAKISTAN BY THE BANGLADESH COUP, THE GOP HAS COME TO ADOPT A WATCHFUL APPROACH

TOWARDS DEVELOPMENTS IN DACCA AND A CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL ASSESSMENT OF WHAT THESE MAY MEAN FOR THE POLITICS OF THE SUBCONTINENT. ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION IN BD LESS THAN TWO WEEKS AFTER THE OVERTHROW OF MUJIB REMAINS FLUID AND THE GOP IS AS UNCERTAIN AS OTHERS ABOUT THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME OF THE POWER STRUGGLE THERE, IT APPEARS TO HAVE DRAWN SEVERAL TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES AND PROSPECTS WHICH THE COUP MAY CREATE FOR PAKISTAN.

2. DESPITE ITS DISAPPOINTMENT AND CHAGRIN THAT THE NEW BDG HAS NOT ADOPTED AN ISLAMIC DESIGNATION, THE GOP CONTINUES TO REGARD THE COUP AS AN IMPORTANT WATER-SHED AND, TENTATIVELY, AS A POSITIVE STEP IN PAK-BD RELATIONS. BEFORE AUGUST 15, THE GOP HAD SET THE BD ISSUE FIRMLY ON ITS BACKBURNER. IN THE FACE OF WHAT IT REGARDED AS MUJIB'S INTRANSIGENCE IT WAS BECOMING PROGRESSIVELY LESS INTERESTED IN SEEKING ACCOMMODATIONS WHICH COULD BREAK THE LONG IMPASSE ON THE PATH TO NORMALIZATION. THIS GROWING OFFICIAL INDIFFERENCE TO BD AND PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH IT WAS WIDELY SHARED BY THE PAK PUBLIC. INDEED, THE LITTLE DOMESTIC PUBLIC PRESSURE THE GOP SENSED ON THE ISSUE CAME FROM THOSE WHO OPPOSED ANY ACCOMMODATION WITH THE BDG: WEST PAKISTANIS WHO HAD LOST PROPERTY IN BD IN 1971 WERE PROMINENT AMONG THEM.

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PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 ORM-01 /095 W

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R 280415Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1775

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

3. THE GOP'S DISINCLINATION TO DEVOTE ANY MAJOR ATTENTION OR EFFORT TO ACHIEVE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH BD WAS HEIGHTENED BY ITS ASSESSMENT OF THE MUJIB GOVERNMENT'S TIES WITH INDIA. ALTHOUGH IT FOUND SOME EVIDENCE OF A DESIRE ON MUJIB'S PART TO ACHIEVE A DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE OF NEW DELHI, ITS BASIC APPRAISAL WAS THAT UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP BD HAD BECOME AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ESSENTIALLY A CLIENT STATE OF INDIA'S. THE GOP ALSO BELIEVED THAT SOVIET SUPPORT FOR MUJIB -- AS A COROLLARY TO INDIA'S DOMINANT ROLE
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IN BANGLADESH -- WAS A FURTHER IMPEDIMENT TO CLOSER TIES BETWEEN ISLAMABAD AND DACCA. THE GOP EVIDENTLY CONCLUDED THAT UNDER THESE DISCOURAGING CIRCUMSTANCES THE BENEFIT TO THE PAKS IN IMPROVING THEIR RELATIONS WITH BD AND ESTABLISHING A PAK PRESENCE IN DACCA WOULD BE VERY LIMITED, CERTAINLY LESS THAN THE PRICE THEY WERE BEING ASKED TO PAY FOR THESE DUBIOUS PRIVILEGES BY THE BDG.

4. THE COUP HAS CHANGED ALL OF THIS DRAMATICALLY. THE GOP NOW SEES BOTH THE POSSIBILITY OF FORWARD MOVEMENT TOWARD IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE BDG AND, MORE IMPORTANT, SEES REAL POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL GAINS IN SUCH TIES. IT ALSO RECOGNIZES THAT IN SEEKING BETTER RELATIONS IT WILL HAVE THE STRONG SUPPORT OF A PUBLIC OPINION IMMENSELY BUOYED BY WHAT MOST PAKS CONSIDER THE "VINDICATION" OF PAKISTAN INVOLVED IN THE OVERTHROW OF MUJIB AND ANXIOUS TO ESTABLISH "FRATERNAL" TIES WITH THE BENGALLEES HE SUPPOSEDLY LED ASTRAY. THESE ARE SENTIMENTS WHICH THE GOP ITSELF APPEARS TO SHARE. THEY ARE SIGNIFICANT IN MAKING THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH BD IMPORTANT AND ATTRACTIVE FOR ITS OWN SAKE, APART FROM ANY BROADER

REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED.

5. THE GOP NOW APPEARS TO BE TAKING A REALISTIC APPROACH IN ASSESSING ITS NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN BD. IT RECOGNIZES THAT WHOEVER HOLDS POWER IN DACCA MUST REMAIN MINDFUL OF INDIAN INTERESTS AND THAT THE GOI WILL CONTINUE TO EXERCISE MAJOR INFLUENCE IN BD. IT IS AWARE THAT THIS INDIAN INFLUENCE, THE SCANTINESS OF ITS OWN ECONOMIC RESOURCES, AND (THOUGH THIS IS NO LONGER CONSIDERED VERY SIGNIFICANT) THE RECOLLECTION IN BD OF THE EVENTS OF 1971 LIMIT THE ROLE IT CAN PLAY. IT IS ALSO FEARFUL THAT TOO FORWARD A POLICY COULD HELP PROVOKE OR PROVIDE A PRETEXT FOR INDIAN INTERVENTION. (ALTHOUGH EARLY INDIAN INTERVENTION IN BD NO LONGER SEEMS AS MUCH A DANGER TO THE GOP NOW AS IT DID LAST WEEK, THE PAKS CONTINUE TO VIEW SUCH A MOVE -- WHETHER DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION AT THE (TRUMPED-UP) CALL OF PRO-INDIAN ELEMENTS OR A DE-CONFIDENTIAL
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STABILIZING EFFORT MAKING USE OF ECONOMIC PRESSURE POINTS AND FLEEING HINDU REFUGEES -- A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY OVER THE COMING MONTHS.) THE GOP IS OF COURSE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THE IMPLICATIONS SUCH AN ASSERTION OF INDIAN SUBCONTINENTAL HEGEMONY WOULD HAVE FOR PAKISTAN ITSELF.

6. THE GOP DOES BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS IT IS NOW PREPARED TO OFFER BD CAN BE AN ELEMENT IN HELPING THE NEW BDG ESTABLISH A POSITION MORE INDEPENDENT OF INDIA THAN IT HAS MANAGED IN THE PAST. AWARE THAT AN ANTI-INDIAN GOVERNMENT CANNOT EXPECT TO HOLD POWER IN DACCA, IT IS HOPEFUL THAT MUJIB'S SUCCESSORS CAN ADOPT A MORE BALANCED POSTURE, INVOLVING GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA, AND WITH PAKISTAN, THE MUSLIM WORLD, THE PRC, AND THE US AS WELL. IT HAS ALREADY USED ITS DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE IN MUSLIM CAPITALS AND PROBABLY WITH THE CHINESE TOO TO WIN SUPPORT FOR THE NEW BDG, AND WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO DO SO PROVIDED IT DOES NOT RECEIVE THE WRONG SIGNALS FROM DACCA. IT RECOGNIZES THAT IT CANNOT ESTABLISH A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH DACCA AND THAT TO TRY TO DO SO WOULD BE BOTH UNREALISTIC AND DANGEROUS. IT WANTS INSTEAD TO PARTICIPATE WITH OTHERS FRIENDLY TO PAKISTAN IN A REORIENTATION OF BDG POLICY WHICH WILL HAVE AS ITS RESULT A LESSENING OF INDIAN AND SOVIET INFLUENCE IN DACCA AND, IN CONSEQUENCE, A LIMITED CHANGE IN ITS OWN FAVOR IN THE POWER BALANCE OF THE SUBCONTINENT. ADDITIONALLY, IT UNDOUBTEDLY SEES ADVANTAGES IN THE INTRODUCTION OF A MEASURE OF UNCERTAINTY ON INDIA'S

EASTERN FLANK WITH THE INSTALLATION OF A LESS INDIA-ORIENTED REGIME IN BD.

7. FOR THE MOMENT, THE GOP IS WATCHING THE ACTION OF THE BDG CAUTIOUSLY AND, IT NOW SEEMS TO US, WITH RISING EXPECTATIONS. MFA HAS BEEN PAYING CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE STATEMENTS COMING OUT OF DACCA AND ARE MOST PLEASED WITH MUSHTAQUE AHMED'S WARM REPLY TO BHUTTO'S MESSAGE OF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT. THEY WERE GRATIFIED EARLIER BY THE EMPHASIS PLACED BY THE BDG ON THE IM-
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PORTANCE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND THE NEED FOR GOOD RELATIONS AMONG ALL STATES IN THE REGION. THIS LAST PHRASE -- USED BY MUSHTAQUE AHMED -- HAS BECOME FOR THE GOP A CODEWORD FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. IF IT CONTINUES TO BE USED, IT WILL BE A POSITIVE SIGNAL TO ISLAMABAD. OTHER "BENCHMARKS" (MFA'S PHRASE) THE GOP WILL BE WATCHING INCLUDE THE EXTENT THE BDG TAKES ON A MORE ISLAMIC CHARACTER (AND SLOUGHS OFF ITS SECULAR IMAGE), THE POSITIONS IF ADOPTS AT THE LIMA CONFERENCE, AND THE ATTITUDES IT EXPRESSES TOWARDS THE RIVAL PAK AND INDIAN CANDIDACIES FOR THE ASIAN UNSC SEAT. (THE GOP DOES NOT EXPECT TO WIN THE BDG'S VOTE BUT WILL BE ENCOURAGED IF DACCA MAKES THE RIGHT NOISES ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY IN CHOOSING BETWEEN TWO SUBCONTINENTAL NEIGHBORS, ETC)

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PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 ORM-01 /095 W

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R 280415Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1776
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

8. WE UNDERSTAND FROM MFA THAT THE PAK OBSERVER AT LIMA WILL BE MEETING WITH BD REPS TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION. THE PAKS ARE LIKELY THERE AND IN OTHER CONTACTS WITH THE BENGALLEES TO BE RECEPTIVE TO ANY BD INITIATIVES LOOKING TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THEY SEEXDHOPEFUL NOW THAT SUCH INITIATIVES WILL BE FORTHECOMING. THE GOP WOULD CERTAINLY AGREE TO EXCHANGE AMBASSADORS WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS, WITH SETTLEMENT OF THE BIHARI REPATRIATION AND ASSET/LIABILITY ISSUES TO BE DEFERRED UNTIL LATER.
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AND IN SUCH AN EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT, THE GOP IS LIKELY TO TAKE A MORE GENEROUS POSITION THAN IT HAD BEFORE AUGUST 15.

9. THE GOP HOPES THAT IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND BD WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT PROGRESS TOWARD INDO-PAK NORMALIZATION. IT REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE SIMLA PROCESS AND SEEMS DETERMINED TO MOVE FORWARD WITH IT. IT RECOGNIZES THAT TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD BE FURTHER TO AROUSE INDIAN SUSPICIONS THAT EVENTS IN DACCA HAVE ENCOURAGED PAKISTAN TO ADOPT A POLICY OF CONFRONTATION, SOMETHING THE GOP WISHES TO AVOID AT THIS SENSITIVE JUNCTURE. AS EVIDENCE OF ITS CONTINUED INTEREST IN PURSUING THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS, THE GOP HAS AGREED WITH THE GOI TO HOLD A FOURTH BILATERAL MEETING TO SETTLE THE SALAL DAM DISPUTE, THEREBY EXTENDING THE PERIOD FOR BILATERAL SETTLEMENT BEYOND THE TWO MONTH DEADLINE AGREED TO EARLIER BY THE TWO FOREIGN SECRETARIES. (WITHOUT THE

EXTENSION AGREEMENT, THE DISPUTE WOULD HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO ARBITRATION UNDER THE INDUS WATERS TREATY.) IT ALSO APPEARS TO BE PREPARED TO RESPOND FAVORABLE TO INDIAN FEELERS FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS ON THE DEADLOCKED CIVIL AIR ISSUE; WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT A LETTER TO INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH INVITING HIM TO LEAD A DELEGATION TO ISLAMABAD IS ABOUT TO BE SENT TO DELHI.

10. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE GOP PRIVATELY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT CHANGING RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH AND BETWEEN BD AND PAKISTAN INTRODUCES NEW UNCERTAINTIES INTO THE SUBCONTINENTAL EQUATION WHICH COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS IN THE INDO-PAK NORMALIZATION PROCESS. AN INDIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN BD WOULD IN ITS VIEW (AND OURS) DELAY FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD ANY FURTHER PROGRESS, A PROGNOSIS MADE EVEN MORE SURE BY THE CERTAINTY THAT PAK PUBLIC OPINION WOULD NOT STAND FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE INDIANS UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. WHETHER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PAK-BD RELATIONS WOULD PROMPT NEW DELHI TO FOLLOW SUIT BY RESTORING ITS OWN TIES WITH ISLAMABAD -- TO CONSIDER A HAPPIER
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PROSPECT -- AND WHETHER IN FACT IMPROVED PAK-BD RELATIONS WILL IN TIME HAVE A FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE OVERALL IMPACT ON INDO-PAK ISSUES ARE MATTERS ABOUT WHICH NEITHER THE PAKS NOR OURSELVES ARE PREPARED TO SPECULATE AT THIS EARLY STAGE.
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